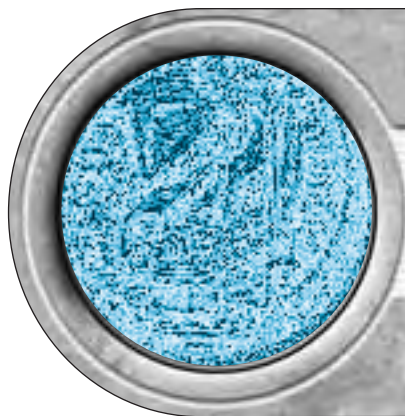




HOLINESS: It Can Only Get Better

January 22, 2011

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Exodus 15:11 (NIV) • “Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”

Psalms 89:35 (NIV) • “Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—and I will not lie to David.”

Isaiah 35:8 (NIV) • “And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.”

Romans 6:19 (NIV) • “I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”

Ephesians 4:24 (NIV) • “And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) • “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Hebrews 12:14 (NIV) • “Make every effort to

live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “HOLINESS”

This week's lesson deals with the concept of holiness and how it relates to our lives in a practical sense. While holiness has been dealt with before, it is a topic that bears repeating. There will be a special focus on obedience as opposed to victory, and on discernment as opposed to one's own strength.

God has granted us salvation, and our response to His action is to believe and to obey His will for us. Obedience is always a reaction to His saving grace, not a ploy to gain favor. Too often we have put the cart before the horse when we speak of leading a holy life. Regardless of what we do, we cannot deserve His grace; rather, it is a gift for us to accept and believe. Our response then, is to follow the will of the one who loves us.

The eradication of sin in our lives is not the primary focus; rather, we are trying to instill good habits of obedience in the young people with whom we are working. It would behoove us to work toward that end instead of creating unrealistic hopes in the lives of our young people.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH “HOLINESS”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Understand more fully the concept of pursuing holiness in their lives.
2. Have some practical tools to use in striving for holiness in life.
3. Better understand the process of moving away from bad habits and replacing them with good habits.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) boom box or other music player, a wall; (Activity B) two blindfolds, two candy bars, music as in Activity A.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Paper, pens or pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN BEFORE

Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:

1. Ask them which verse they chose to learn from Wednesday's portion of their lesson. Give them opportunity to say their verses from memory.
2. Give the students opportunity to "quote" themselves, using what they wrote in the Monday portion of their lesson. Be sure to debrief them about any quotations that might not reflect the Christian life accurately. However, quotations of this nature do not occur in every lesson.
3. Review responses that they and others made to the scenario that was posed on Sunday. Discuss the variety of responses, ending with thoughts from last week's What's to Be Said About . . . in the teacher lesson.

If you have a very large group, have adults available to process this section with smaller groups of students.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adult* at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word. At some point you should distribute or call their attention to their student lesson for this week.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Have music playing as the students come into the room. Let the room settle and begin with a warm welcome.

Get set • Ask for one or more volunteers. Tell them you are going to have them do a challenge that will test their ability to stop. Ask each of them to stand about 10 to 15 feet from an unobstructed wall in the room. Then ask them if they would run as fast as they can and stop only centimeters before the wall. They must make sure they do not touch the wall itself.

Go • Once the students have tried (inevitably someone will hit the wall), have the other students vote on who ran the hardest toward the wall and who came the closest to the wall.

Debriefing • Ask: What was wrong with this game? (Answers will vary, but probably will reflect displeasure in the fact that students would hit the wall.) **Why is this not a good game?** (It is dangerous. You can't run up to the wall and expect to stop without some damage.) **Hold that thought; we are going to explore a little later how we often play this game in our own lives.**

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Allow time for a good number of students to come into the room. Do preliminary activities and when it is time to begin the lesson, ask for two volunteers.

Get set • Take the volunteers into the hallway or somewhere out of the room, and leave them there. Then return to the room to instruct the class. Tell the class to move their chairs into a circle and then stand to the side. Hide two candy bars (or some other type of treat) that have been identified differently somewhere in the circle (in two different places). Then divide the students into two teams by numbering them off. Tell each team which candy bar is “theirs.”

Tell the class that when the two blindfolded participants reenter the room they will each be told where their team is standing. It is the job of each team to call out and tell their teammate where their team’s candy bar is, and how best to get it. Teams are also allowed to call out and try to confuse the other team’s candy seeker. The team who’s player gets the candy bar first wins.

Go • As the blindfolded teammates begin their search, start playing music to further distract the players. With all the hustle-bustle and noise, it will be hard to tell who to listen to. Especially when the other team is trying to yell orders as well.

Debriefing • Ask: Was this game difficult? **Why?** (Answers will vary, of course, but the theme is that it was difficult to hear the correct instructions.) To the blindfolded participants **ask:** How did you know who to trust? Was it easy to follow directions? Did the music confuse you more? If you had a chance to do it again, what, if anything, would you do differently?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

You wake up in the morning and finally find the time to be alone with God. You use your

quiet time wisely, and you are looking forward to a good day. You have asked the Lord for victory over sin, and you truly believe that He is wanting you to live a better life, a life of trust and obedience. As you finish your devotions, you get up and go to take a shower. However, when you get there you see that your sister has already gotten into the bathroom and you have to wait. “No problem,” you tell yourself. After about 20 minutes you are becoming anxious. You need to get ready for school and your sister is being very inconsiderate. After half an hour you are not just concerned, you are upset. Every minute that passes you can feel your internal thermometer getting hotter and hotter. When your sister finally exits the bathroom, you make sure that you give her a piece of your mind.

As you enter the bathroom, you find yourself full of regret, knowing you have already lost control and given into temptation. The temptation to be angry and to say harsh words. A temptation to lash out at your sister. As you prepare yourself for school, you realize that all your quiet time with Jesus, and your preparation for the day just vanished in a moment of anger, and you say to yourself, well, maybe tomorrow I will find victory over my temper.

Debriefing • Ask: Has this ever happened to any of you? How often do you find yourself in this situation? Why do you keep making the same silly mistakes that you have asked God for victory over? Could God actually help you?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

As agents in God’s kingdom, there are certain things we need to do in order to be like God—or Christlike is another way to say it. What are those things? One is a desire to sin as little as possible. As we have seen in the beginning il-

lustration, that is a tough thing to do. We as humans have a natural propensity toward sin, and the devil is awfully good at tempting us into sin. Often we talk about victory over sin. However, this means that we rely on our own power to beat Satan and his temptations. Really, those of us who see ourselves as agents of God need only to look to one thing, and that is obedience to God's will in our lives. As we study and as we pray, we find the more we conform to God's will in our lives, the easier it is to be obedient. As we are obedient, temptation has less and less effect on us. Sure we will make mistakes, that is why there is forgiveness and grace. Can we eradicate sin from our lives? No. But can we continually conform to God's will? Absolutely! That is what it means to live a kingdom life!

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's portion of the lesson.

Ask: Have any of you felt this way? Do any of you know anyone who acts this way? What is wrong with Jim's life? What does it mean to live in response to the grace of God? Even though there is forgiveness and grace, shouldn't we try to overcome sin anyway? (Refer to the thoughts in Connecting to the Kingdom for help with answering this question.)

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: In Romans 6:19 it states: "I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness." This seems like a tall order. How would this work out in your life?

Share the following ideas in your own words:

They say it takes 21 days to create a habit. Look at your life and see how many habits you have, both good and bad. What does it take to

break a habit? It would be safe to say that it would take at least 21 days to break one if it takes that long to create one. This concept of obeying God and doing His will is hard, and so we need to be intentional about creating new habits. God wants us to live in righteousness and holiness. The way we do that is by constantly claiming the power of the Holy Spirit and reminding ourselves of God's grace and mercy to us. This enables us to overcome our bad habits and be more like Christ.

The Friday portion of this lesson has something called the 21-day Challenge. This is not a formula for overcoming sin. If overcoming sin were that easy, someone other than Jesus would have done it a long time ago. However, we can make small strides in our struggle with sin and bad habits by becoming very intentional in the way we deal with those things that tempt us. Let's take a look at the 21-day Challenge and apply it to our lives.

(Note: The 21-day Challenge is not something that the students, if they are honest, are probably going to want to share with anyone, so make sure you go over the different questions, but that you do not deal too specifically with any one person or bad habit. Be very general and allow kids to fill it out at home if they want. It would be good to mark in your calendar to do a quick follow up 21 days later, offering encouragement in the weeks between, in order to have some accountability with this activity.)

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Divide students into groups of from three to five. Have them spend some time discussing what they think are the three biggest challenges facing them and the young people around them in their pursuit of holiness. Allow time for them to come up with a well thought-out list and then see if the lists match among the groups.

Debriefing • Ask: Isn't it interesting that so

many groups have so many of the same answers? What does this mean? Is there a common tendency that we can help each other overcome? Is there a way we can be more accountable to one another? What are some practical suggestions you have for overcoming in some of these areas?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What are the main issues you think that people your age are dealing with when it comes to temptation and holiness?
2. What are some practical things you can do to thwart temptation (see **Matthew 4**)?
3. Do you think your friends are willing to help you in your pursuit of holiness?
4. How can being accountable to someone or to a group help you deal with sin in your life?
5. Is there any wisdom that your parents might have for you in this regard?
6. If you could ask God to help you overcome one thing right now, what would it be? (Have them answer this to themselves.)

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

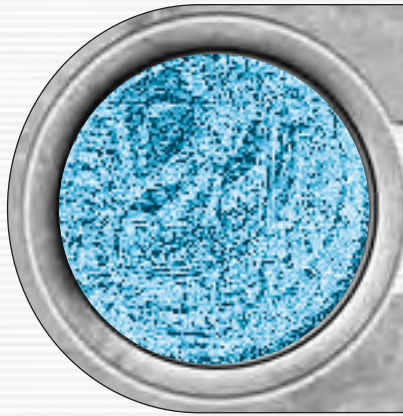
Check to make sure that the concept of holiness as a response to grace has been the first and most important lesson your students have learned from this week's lesson.

Then in your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Holiness is something we strive for, but we obtain only through the grace of Jesus Christ. The overcoming of bad habits is a process, and we will have victories and defeats along the way.

Prayer of Commitment

Have the students divide into groups of two or three and pray for the desire to be obedient to God. And then have them come together and pray as a group for the commitment to holiness as a corporate Sabbath school class. Take time for silent prayer requests.



STUDENT LESSON

HOLINESS:

It Can Only Get Better

January 22, 2011

>>KEY TEXT: Choose one of the texts from Wednesday's portion of the lesson. Write it here and memorize it this week.



IT CAN ONLY GET BETTER

(What connection do you think the following illustration has with the Bible texts on the other page?)

Jim is a good guy. In fact, everyone thinks that Jim has it all figured out. He leads out in singing at church, he gets good grades, and everyone seems to really like him. You can often see Jim running errands for teachers or making sure that no one is left out of a game on the playing field. Jim is one of those people that seem to know the secret to happiness. He is never down or depressed. He always has a smile on his face for anyone who needs it. He continually tries to be better and better in his life. In fact, some have even said that it seems as if Jim is perfect. When you look around his life, you can't seem to see anything that Jim does wrong. He is not even late to class unless he is helping out someone else.

However, what no one knows about Jim is that he is scared. He is incredibly scared that he has not done enough to be saved by Jesus Christ. Jim feels as if making a mistake might

keep him out of heaven. Everything that Jim does is in order to gain favor from God. He thinks that if he can do enough good things then God has to save him.

Poor Jim, he doesn't understand one very important thing. We are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ alone, and all those good things we do are done because Jesus first saved us. They are always a response to the grace that has been given to us. Jim does all these great and wonderful things, but he is truly scared inside because he is not sure that he has done enough to be saved. What a scary way to live!



Sunday

HERE'S WHAT I THINK

Johnny has a bad habit. It seems as if no matter what he does, he keeps falling into the same thing again and again. He has asked God for victory, but he can't seem to stop what he is doing. His problem is that he keeps going back to some places that he shouldn't when he is searching the Internet. He knows that he shouldn't go there, but he has done it so much, it seems as if he can't stop.

1. What do you think Johnny should do?
2. What is the difference between asking for God's help and becoming obedient to His will?
3. How can Johnny use his community to help him with such a problem?

Log on to www.guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your responses. Be up-front and honest. Say what you think.



Monday

WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?

Different people, different opinions. Some of the quotations below represent the views of true kingdom citizens; others may not. Can you tell the difference? How do these statements compare with what God is saying in His Word? After reviewing the texts in the God Says . . . portion of the lesson, write a statement that captures your belief. Be prepared to quote yourself at Sabbath School.

>>“Holiness is the architectural plan upon which God buildeth up His living temple.”—*Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 19th-century popular English preacher and author.*

>>“When all is done, there is no such error or heresy, nothing so fundamentally opposed to religion, as a wicked life.”—*John Tillotson, 17th-century English prelate, archbishop of Canterbury.*

>>“All sin comes from not putting supreme value on the glory of God—this is the very essence of sin.”—*John Piper, current U.S. preacher, author.*

>>“Nothing whatever pertaining to godliness and real holiness can be accomplished without grace.”—*Saint Augustine (354-430), Christian church father.*

>>“I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies, for the hardest victory is over self.”—*Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Greek philosopher.*

>>“In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves . . . self-discipline with all of them came first.”—*Harry S. Truman (1884-1972), 33rd U.S. President.*

>>“There ain’t no sin and there ain’t no virtue. There’s just stuff people do. It’s all part of the same thing. And some of the things folks do is nice, and some ain’t nice, but that’s as far as any man got a right to say.”—*John Ernst Steinbeck, 20th-century U.S. writer.*

Write your own quotation.

WHAT I SAY IS . . .



Tuesday

SO WHAT?

Why is holiness important? It is a mandate from God (see **Hebrews 12:14**). However, don’t be confused. We still have sinful natures. We know that total perfection is received only through the grace of Jesus Christ and at the Second Coming. But what we have been called to be is obedient to Christ and His will for us in every way that He reveals it. This obedience always includes a desire not to sin and hurt our best Friend, and to overcome temptation through the power of His grace.

As we seek what the Lord wants for us, we continue to grow in His grace. We are never more saved than we were when we accepted Him, but we can continue to grow in our actions and in our responses to His will. This becomes a more powerful desire in us the more we seek the heart of God. While we leave the work of perfecting us up to God, we concentrate on an ever closer walk with Him, and a better understanding of His grace.

As well, God has said He wants to give us life more abundantly. That is a life without the regrets that come from living our own way instead of His way. We want to be Christians who are walking in the light of God and looking at our past with happiness, not with regret. Obedience to God helps us with that. It really is the only insurance of a great life.



Wednesday

GOD SAYS . . .

>>**Exodus 15:11 (NIV)**

“Who among the gods is like you, O Lord ? Who

is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”

>>Isaiah 35:8 (NIV)

“And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.”

>>Romans 6:19 (NIV)

“I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”

>>Ephesians 4:24 (NIV)

“And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

>>Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

>>Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”



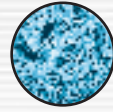
Thursday

**WHAT DOES THIS
HAVE TO DO WITH ME?**

EVERYTHING! You are the one who makes the choices in your life. You have the power to follow the will of God or to choose not to. You have the power to move in a godly direction or a sinful direction. God is waiting for you to ask for His help, and to give it to you in abundance (a lot).

So the question becomes, What are you going to do with this knowledge? Are you going to continue in your pursuit of holiness, or are you going to let it go? It has everything to do with you because you decide how you are going to live

your life. Continue on in making good decisions, and be encouraged that we all fight the same fight.



Friday

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The 21-day Challenge

1. I would like to be obedient to God’s will in my life when it comes to: (list temptation you want God to help you overcome)

2. I find myself engaging in this activity, or thinking these thoughts when I am:

- ☐ Alone ☐ With my friends
☐ With my family ☐ Other

3. I have friends who would be interested in being accountability partners with me.

Yes _____ No _____

4. I will commit the next 3 weeks (21 days) to overcoming one bad habit I have.

Signed _____

Date _____

Here are some words of encouragement that God has already spoken to help you through the next 21 days:

Philippians 4:13 (NIV)—I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Romans 15:15 (NIV)—I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me.

2 Corinthians 1:6 (NIV)—If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation;

if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)—Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit

those who listen.

Colossians 4:2 (NIV)—Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Philemon 20 (NIV)—I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.



